

## A MID-OCEAN DUEL OF THE TWO BIGGEST MONSTERS OF THE SEA.



## A Naturalist's Story of a Devilfish and a Whale in Deadly Battle.

A fight to the death between the two greatest monsters of the ocean—the sperm whale and the giant squid—was recently witnessed by a naturalist.

Of all the wonders of the deep that men witness who go down to the sea in ships none could be greater than this. It was a fight between two giants, either of whom could have destroyed whole companies of men.

To see these monsters come up from the depths where they are supreme, and fight in the light of day was a rare sight for a man. It is fortunate that the witness was a scientific observer, who has written a narrative which cannot be treated as a sailor's yarn.

The sperm whale is the most valuable, as well as the most formidable of the many species in which the family is divided. It is distinguished by the possession of teeth. Frequently it attains a length of a hundred feet, and is therefore not only the largest animal in the sea, but in the world. There are records of individuals much larger than this. So powerful is the sperm whale it can sink a ship.

The squid is one of the most fearful creatures to be found in the ocean, although only in a few species does it reach a size to enable it to struggle with the whale.

The giant squid attains a length of forty feet. It is furnished with ten long, flexible arms, each having a sucker at the end capable of dragging a weight of many hundreds of pounds through the water. It has a large cutting beak, shaped like that of a parrot and black eyes of a most evil expression. Those of the creature described in the present fight were a foot in diameter. The giant squid has been known to throw one of its arms into a boat and drag a man out of it. It has the power of ejecting an inky fluid, which conceals its whereabouts in the water.

The naturalist who witnessed the great fight was Frank Bullen, an Englishman, with an established scientific reputation. He was cruising at the time in a whaler

and was in the Straits of Malacca, between the Nicobars and the Malay Peninsula. He writes:

"I had the watch from eight bells to midnight, and at about 11 p. m., was leaning over the lee rail, idly gazing seaward, when the rising moon was making a broad lane of silvery light upon the smooth, dark waters. Presently there was a commotion in the sea, right in the way of the moon, and I immediately went for the night glasses to ascertain, if possible, the nature of it. In that neighborhood there are several active volcanoes, and at first I judged the present disturbance to be one of these, sending up debris from the sea bed. A very short examination satisfied me that the trouble, whatever it might be, was not of volcanic or seismic origin. I called the captain, as in duty bound, but he was indisposed to turn out for anything short of actual danger, so the watch and I had the sight to ourselves.

"We edged away a little under the light draught of wind, so as to draw nearer to the scene, and presently were able to realize its full significance. A very large sperm whale was engaged in deadly conflict with a monstrous squid, whose far-reaching tentacles enveloped the whale's whole body.

"The light whiteness of those writhing arms, which entwined the cachalot like a nest of mighty serpents, stood out in bold relief against the black border-like head of the aggressor. Presently the whale raised itself half out of water, and we plainly saw the awful looking head of the gigantic mollusk. At our distance, something under a mile, it appeared about the size of one of our largest oil casks, which held 326 gallons. Like the rest of the animal visible, it was of a peculiar dead-white, and in it gleamed two eyes of inky blackness, about a foot in diameter.

"To describe the wonderful contortions of those two monsters, locked in a deadly embrace, is far beyond my powers, but it was a never to be forgotten sight. The utter absence of all sound, for we were not near enough to hear the turmoil of the troubled sea, was not the least remarkable feature of this titanic encounter.

All around the combatants, too, were either smaller whales or immense sharks, who were evidently assisting in the destruction of the great squid, and getting a full share of the feast. As we looked spell-bound we saw the writhing gradually cease, and the encircling tentacles gradually slip off the whale's body, which seemed to float unassisted high. At last all was over, and the whole commotion had completely subsided, leaving no trace behind but an intensely strong odor as of a rocky coast at low tide in the full blaze of the sun.

"Since that night I have never had a doubt either as to the origin of all serpent stories or the authenticity of the old Norse legends of the Kraken; for who could blame a seaman witnessing such a sight, and all unaccustomed to the close observation of whales, for reporting some fearsome monster with horrid mane and floating 'many a rood.' An interesting account of the French gunboat Albatros falling in with a calmar forty feet in length, lying on the surface in the North Atlantic, once fell into my hands. It told how those on board succeeded in getting a hawser passed round the creature, but in heaving it tight the rope cut its way through the soft, gelatinous body, which floated away in halves, and gradually sank."

From this it is plain that the whale attacked the squid. The former is in fact in the habit of feeding on the latter, but it is doubtful if a whale often chooses so powerful an antagonist as in this case. Mr. Bullen has some other interesting observations on the same subject.

"On another occasion we were cruising between Tongatabu (Friendly Islands) and Futuwa, or Horn Island. Just before sunset a solitary sperm whale of goodly size was harpooned by us, and immediately sounded to a depth of 500 fathoms. He remained below the surface for about forty minutes, so that when he broke water again it was nearly dark. Of the terrors of that night I might say much, but this is not the place, neither do I think it were that I could do anything like justice to the subject. Suffice it to say that his agility and vitality were such that of

any whale that I have met with, and it was well into the small hours of the morning before he gave up the contest.

"When day dawned we found that his lower jaw was twisted at right angles to his body, the result probably of some terrible conflict in the long ago. The outstanding portion of the jaw was almost covered with lumps of massive appearance, some measuring six inches across the base, and the intervening spaces were filled in with fringing barnacles of great length, giving the semblance of a hoary beard.

"This alone was sufficient to endow a creature of such normal ugliness with an uncanny, prehistoric sort of look—and there were not wanting members of our crew to exclaim that this was surely Davy Jones himself. But the chief peculiarity about this cachalot, and, indeed, the reason why I mention him here at all, was the extreme hardness and dryness of his blubber. Under ordinary conditions a whale of his size should have yielded at least seventy barrels of oil, but owing, I suppose, to the difficulty he must have had to procure food, it was only with an extraordinary expenditure of labor that we succeeded in extracting from him thirty-two barrels of oil. The opinion of all on board competent to give one was, that being unable to cope with the big squid, owing to the loss of his great weapon, the lower jaw, he had been driven to seek support on such food as he could obtain, and only managed to exist in a state of semi-starvation. Doubtless this accounted for his agility, and his fine drawn body, more like that of one of the Balænoptera than of a cachalot, went far to confirm the idea.

"And now I come to the final instance for the present paper, but by no means the least important, at least to my mind, since it has settled several vexed questions for me finally. We were cruising in the Straits of Malacca, between the Nicobars and the Malay Peninsula, and had succeeded in killing a full-sized sperm whale. He had been a tough customer, needing all our energies to cope with him, but a well-directed bomb closed the negotiations just before sunset. As usual, he had ejected the contents of his stomach before dying, and we specially noticed the immense size of some of the masses floating about. By common consent they were about as large as our hatchhouse, which measured 8 feet by 6 feet by 8 feet. I must very distinctly state that these masses were not square, but irregularly-shaped masses, fifteen or twenty blocks from the body of some gigantic squid.

## Rev. Dr. Parks Writes of the Immorality of Bathing Suits.

A word to my brothers of the cloth. The bathing season is at hand, with all its attendant temptations and evils. Now is the time, if you have not already done so, to decay the fin-de-siècle sin of our young women—namely, the wearing of improper bathing dresses.

I am prompted to write on this subject from the following incident which came under my notice. At one of our fashionable watering places a sensational yet instructive scene took place. The day was warm and clear. The sea was calm and peaceful. The sun sparkled and shimmered upon the rippling waters. The surf was not boisterous, but came in regular rolling breakers, which spent themselves upon the inclining sandy beach. Hundreds of persons in bathing costumes were enjoying a dip in old ocean.

Fearless men plunged into some great, green billow as they rolled in; then, shaking their heads as they emerged, they struck boldly out to swim into deeper waters. Women, like nymphs, sported in the breakers, bracing themselves against the incoming waves, or allowing themselves to be submerged in an unusually large and heavy billow, emerging like mermaids from its depths. Children played in the shallows near the shore, or ran screaming from the waves, which chased them up the beach. It was a familiar scene to dwellers near the sea, but always new and attractive.

Among the bathers was a young woman attired in a most unbecoming and immodest bathing suit. She attracted much attention, though she seemed to be unattended. The vulgar among the spectators enjoyed the sensation she produced, but the cultured and refined were displeased and disgusted. Soon a bathing master approached the young woman and, gently taking her by the arm, led her out of the surf and forbade her to come there again, until she was suitably and modestly dressed.

Now come one who was to blame for this unpleasant incident. If that young woman herself was an abandoned creature, who had blunted her native modesty by dissipation, who had no character to maintain, and who had long since lost respect for the opinion

of others, then she herself was the guilty party and the bathing master did right in banishing her from the society of decent people. She had no right to mingle with civilized and refined persons if she insisted in disregarding the proprieties of life.

If, however, she was a respectable young lady, and had a mother who cared for the best interests of her daughter, then it was the duty of that mother to teach her child these proprieties. If she had not done so, she was to blame; and if she had done so, and the young lady disregarded her teachings, then she herself was the guilty party and received the just punishment of her thoughtlessness.

But yet again, if she had no mother to love her, and no relative to wisely instruct her as to her best good, then it was clearly the duty and privilege of her pastor to instruct her concerning this very matter about which she was at fault.

There is no doubt that pastors are blameable who neglect to warn young women under their charge against immodest and improper behavior everywhere, and especially concerning dress and deportment at the seashore.

There is so much temptation to seek admiration for a beautiful figure, so much catering to the applause of Summer acquaintances of the opposite sex, that young women need to be warned against improprieties of dress and deportment, and to be taught that there are higher objects to live for, than to catch the applause of the thoughtless at the expense of modesty and womanliness. Surely no one out of the house circle is better qualified to give this kind of instruction than the pastor, and he is verily guilty of neglect of duty and recreant to his trust if he omits it.

No doubt it required no little manliness and an absence of unwholesome prudery on the part of pastors to speak freely on such themes, but when the clergyman himself is pure minded, and really desires to educate his people to purity, he will never hesitate to speak plainly.

A pastor in a large city determined to preach a course of sermons on the Ten Commandments. Of course he had no difficulty in speaking of idolatry, or of

bath breaking, or profanity, and he was faithful in setting forth the claims and requirements of each commandment. And when he came to the Seventh Commandment he did not flinch in the slightest degree, but presented not only the crime of adultery, but the steps which lead to it.

He told his people that an unnecessary and indecent exposure of the person, even when fashion and custom demanded it, was a step toward the violation of the Seventh Commandment—that popular bathing places, while they furnished the means of cleanliness for the body, sometimes furnished the means for uncleanness of thought and of heart, which would be very apt to manifest in uncleanness in life. If dared to speak plainly and truthfully and his people esteemed him the more highly, for it.

The time is past when the pulpit is to crouch and measure its words lest some one shall be offended. Let pastors dare to rebuke public evils, because they are evils, and all well disposed persons, whether in or out of the church, will estimate him the more highly.

J. H. PARKS.

## BATTLE WITH A SHARK.

A Daring Italian Sailor Attacks a Monster Specimen and Stabs Him to Death.

A short time ago the Italian Government sent a torpedo boat to a bay near Genoa, to blow up a wreck which hindered navigation. Arriving there, the first thing the captain saw was a tremendous shark, and realized that operations could not safely be commenced so long as the shark was present. So he fired a rifle at the fish, but only slightly wounded it.

Then a sailor, named Giuseppe Romano, stepped forward and offered to kill it. Having obtained permission to do so, he jumped into the sea and, armed with nothing but a dagger, swam straight toward the monster fish. For fifteen minutes the battle raged, happily ending with the victory of the weaker sailor. Four or five times he sank his dagger deep into the body of his vicious antagonist, and the monster, worn out and only unable to move, was at last killed.